

NO CHANGE in Class: 

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Class. CHANGED TO: TS S

PDA Memo, 4 Apr 77  
Auth: DDA RIN: 77/1125 CONFIDENTIAL CONTROL U.S. OFFICIALS ONLY

Date: 14 APR 1978 By: 028

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This document is hereby regarded to  
letter of 16 October 1978 from the  
Director of Central Intelligence to the  
Archivist of the United States.

DATE:   
INFO:   
Next Review Date: 2008

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COUNTRY: China

SUBJECT: Military Information: New North Korean Army  
in Manchuria

DIST: 15 July 1947

PAGES: 2

SUPPLEMENT

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ORIGIN: 

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1. About mid-April 1947 a new, well equipped and recently Soviet-trained Korean Communist Volunteer Army of approximately 50,000 men departed from Chosan (Sezan) (125-48, 40-50) and entered Manchuria  at 128-05, 41-55<sup>2</sup> via the small Chang Pai mountain range  Soback-san, 41-52, 128-12<sup>2</sup>  traveling to Tunghua (126-14, 43-22) via Fusung (127-18, 42-20). The commander of these troops then and at present is KIM Un-kap ( 金 云 [云?] 告 ), of general officer rank, aged 44.
2. These troops traveled northward during early May, moving the main body of their forces into Tunghua about 6 May, with advanced units moving northeast of Shulan (126-48, 44-21) about that date. Some units of the army were said to have been reviewed by General LIN Peo at front line posts northeast of Shulan on 7 May 1947. They traveled the mountain ranges at night in order to hide their movements from Nationalist spies and suddenly to confront the Nationalist forces with a fresh, well trained army.
3. As the army progressed northward to occupy the Sungari River defense line south and southeast of Harbin, it also dispatched agents and saboteurs into Nationalist-held towns, particularly Fushun (123-54, 41-53), Tunghua (125-57, 41-43), and Kirin (126-32, 43-51). Two of these agents, after scouting the Nationalist situation at Kirin, traveled through the area to prepare for the entry of more agents (in advance of the Chinese Communist attack) into Kirin and Changchun. One of the agents estimated that over 600 underground agents of the new army had been successfully planted in various Nationalist centers.

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4. A more nearly accurate estimate of the number of agents planted by this army in Nationalist centers would be about 300.

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5. The chief purpose of the new army's entry into Manchuria is to bolster Chinese Communist forces for the May offensive and to relieve certain Korean units numbering about 20,000 men, which had been fighting in Manchuria with the Chinese Communists for some time as members of the Korean Volunteer Corps. The new army was specially trained by Soviets and was described by some of its own members as specially equipped with Soviet and Japanese arms, mostly the latter. It had been training in North Korea since September 1946 as a unit. Its field officers are

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from the original ranks of the Korean Volunteer Corps, but its squad leaders and many of its junior officers are recent graduates of the Korean Communist Officers Training Schools [? Peace Preservation Corps Officers Training Schools,] in North Korea.

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6. It is estimated that the new army of 50,000, added to those in the Chientao area and already in the Harbin area, would raise Korean Volunteer Army strength in Manchuria to about 70,000. (Newspapers report from 80,000-100,000.)

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[redacted] reported in May that 30,000 cadets of the North Korean Peace Preservation Training Corps were organized into a new Korean army on 22 April. It has also been reported that the Korean Volunteer Army, located in eastern Manchuria, was deactivated and returned to North Korea, the order for the deactivation reportedly having gone out on 15 August 1946. At that time there was no "Korean National Army" in existence, but evidence of the formation of such an army from the returned Korean Volunteer Corps (Army) was first reported in October 1946. About November 1946 the North Korean Constabulary, or Kyung Bi Dai, was reported to have merged with the new national army. The same report states that the new Korean army would be called the Kyung Bi Dai. However, other and more recent reports indicate that the name may be officially "North Korean Volunteer Army".

Other reports from various sources indicate that the North Korean government, with the backing of the Soviets, has pulled the old Korean Volunteer Corps back to North Korea; put many of its officers into the old Kyung Bi Dai along with Koreans trained in the USSR; put graduates of the North Korean training schools into the lower echelons of the Kyung Bi Dai; merged the Kyung Bi Dai with the main force of the returned Korean Volunteer Corps; and called the new army either the Kyung Bi Dai or the North Korean Volunteer Army. Prior to this, the North Korean forces were known as the "Army of KIM Il-sung" or the "Army of the North Korean People's Committee", chiefly because a provisional government may not legally maintain an army.

If the above is true, it is likely that any unit of North Korean troops sent to Manchuria will be a part of the new national army and that irregular units will begin to disappear as they are absorbed into it.

Further indications are that the North Korean Government, again with the help of the Soviets, is sending large units of the new army to Manchuria to gain battle experience with the Chinese Communists in preparation for a possible war between North and South Korea after the withdrawal of Soviet and American occupation forces. There are reports that large Korean units have moved into the Chiamuszu (130-21, 46-49) area and from there to the battle front. These movements differ from those of the fall and winter months of 1946 and early 1947 in that the units involved are coming from North Korea and that they are of much larger size than the units previously reported. The new "armies" are usually reported as Soviet-trained and well equipped with Japanese or Soviet weapons. It has not yet been established that Korean troops actually took part in the Chinese Communist attack on Changchun in May, but it is possibly true that they are taking part in the so-called "May offensive" and that their units will be found on the major battlefronts. A United Press staff correspondent reports full strength Korean divisions operating in the Kirin area, one of which was on 1 June attacking Yentungshan (125-59, 43-17) and Pishih, 24 miles south of Yentungshan (Panshih—125-59, 42-56?).

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